

MOSQUITO COAST

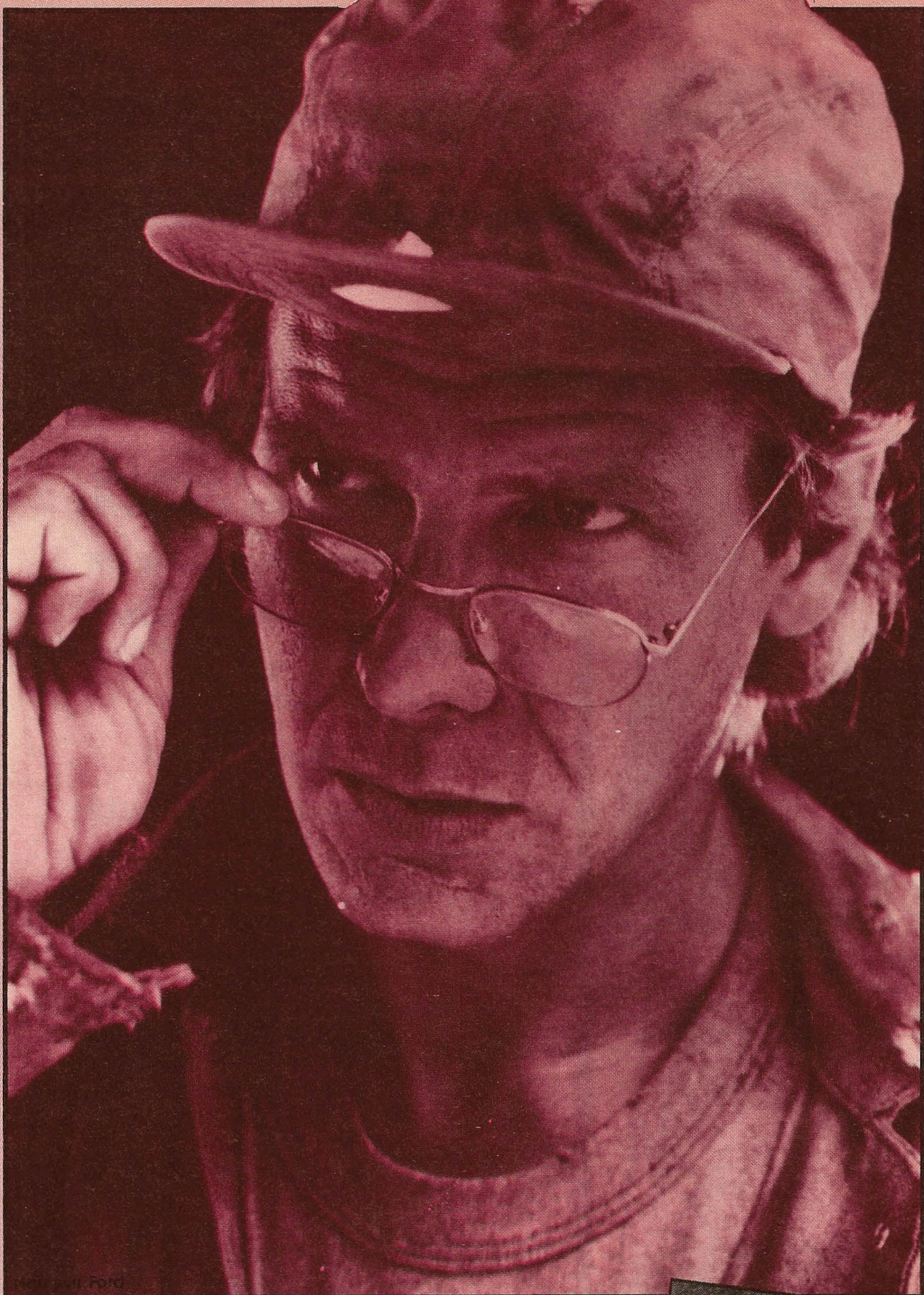
Harrison Ford, Helen Mirren
CBS Fox Video
113 minutes, 1986
Certificate 'PG'
VHS, Beta



Director Peter Weir and Harrison Ford proved triumphant with their teaming on *Witness*, and so we are treated to the same pairing with this tale of modern day castaways. The basic theme is the same — urban man finds himself adrift amid an older, less sophisticated environment. The resolution, however, couldn't be more different!

Allie Fox (Harrison Ford) is a highly intelligent inventor who becomes obsessed with the pursuit of a dream: to escape America in search of a simpler, purer existence. Sickened by the urban ravages on the countryside, pollution, junk food, foreign imports and the threat of nuclear war, he ups his wife (Helen Mirren), two sons and twin daughters and takes off for the Mosquito Coast. This strip of land extends from Puerto Barrios in Guatemala to Colon in Panama — a wild, untamed area which Fox envisages will offer his children the most fundamental truths about life. He proceeds to buy a small town, and sets the natives about their tasks of re-building their settlements. Soon there's an impressive array of dwellings complete with primitive air conditioning. Towards this end, Fox brings what he deems to be his biggest contribution to the locals: ice. The frozen blocks of water, created in a sophisticated contraption built in the middle of the jungle, represent civilisation to Fox, and the natives are understandably ecstatic by the discovery. Air conditioning and a means to keep food fresh are just two of the ice machine's uses, and the community finds itself comfortably self-sufficient.

Fox, however, is still dissatisfied, until a further challenge presents itself. He learns of a primitive tribe deep in the heart of the jungle, and decides

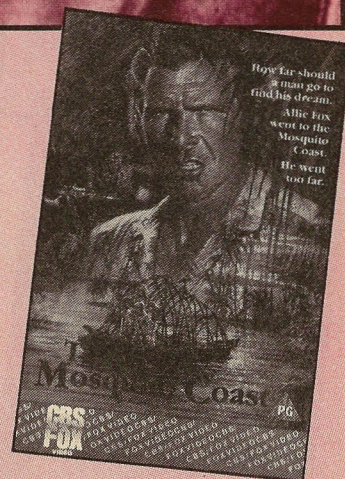


to present them with a gift of ice as part of a misguided attempt to introduce civilisation. Once arrived, he encounters a small group of what he believes to be prisoners, little realising that they are ruthless criminals. Together with an over-zealous American missionary, Fox's utopia is threatened from both fronts of crime and religion, and the simple life becomes a grim battle for survival.

The assembled talents of Weir, Mirren and Ford prove an impressive combination. Particularly when Ford strays so far

from his established, romantic leading man image and is presented as a scruffy, obsessive intellectual. Paul (Taxi Driver) Schrader wrote the screenplay from Paul Theroux's novel, and the result is an uncompromising appraisal of American values and intellectual arrogance. Also completing the cast is River Phoenix of *Stand By Me*, who as Fox's eldest son once more demonstrates that he is one of Hollywood's most exciting young actors.

Mosquito Coast is not an easy film, but it's



skilful and thought-provoking and is a must for Harrison Ford fans.

Colette Maude